



Goals of the Colyer Prairie Group

CPG seeks to purchase the Colyer Prairie to preserve it in perpetuity, to make the site available as a community resource for prairie education and appreciation, and to expand the Colyer Prairie through restoration of adjacent land. The pristine prairie remnant occupies 10 acres of a 159-acre parcel, which the current owners will not subdivide. To purchase the entire parcel, we will take one-acre pledges of \$2,500 each from individuals until we can make the down payment of \$80,000 on the purchase price of approximately \$320,000. We will also solicit money from conservation foundations and government programs. All donations to the Colyer Group are tax deductible.

☐ If you wish to help please contact:
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OR

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Bleeding Kansas and Civil War History

The road bordering Colyer Prairie was one of two that connected the Santa Fe and Oregon trails in Douglas County.

On 11 August 1856, proslavery men killed free-stater David Starr Hoyt along the road, ~100 yards northeast of Colyer Prairie. Four days later, free-staters retaliated by pillaging and burning the proslavery Fort Saunders, located one mile north of the prairie.

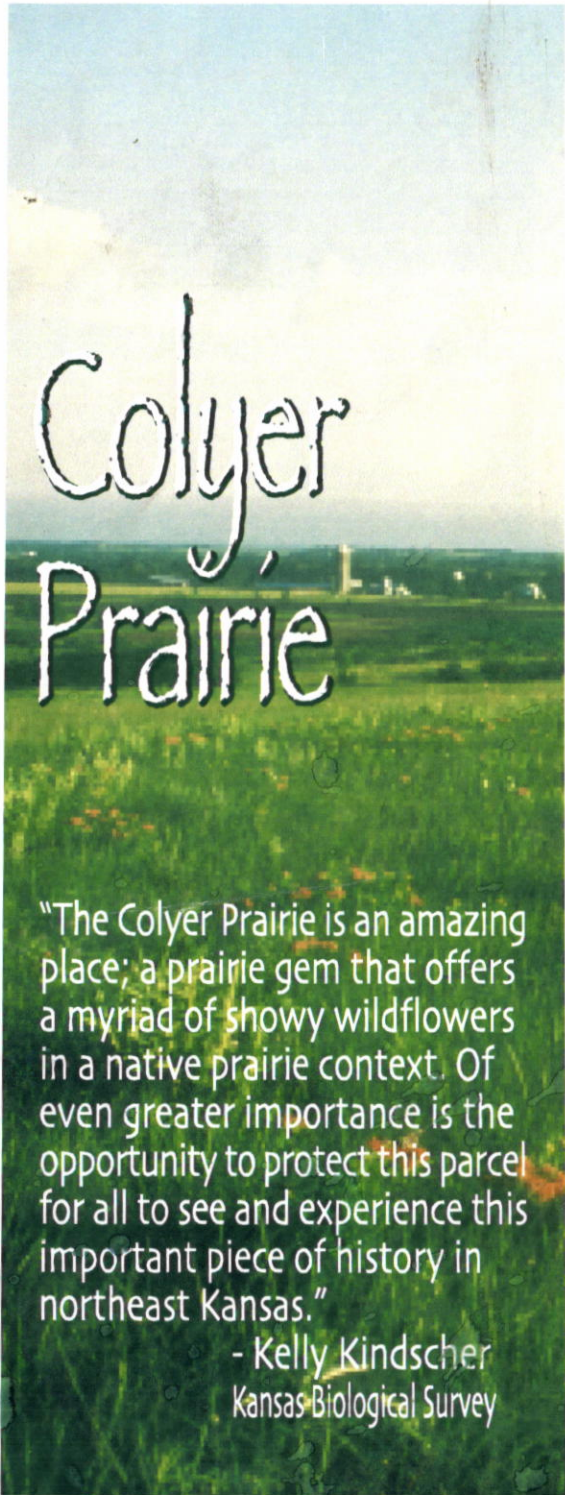
On 21 August 1863, Quantrill's raiders sacked Lawrence. Part of the group then went in search of John C. Metsker, a German Brethren who operated an Underground Railroad station southwest of Lone Star. After failing to find Metsker, who was hiding in a cornfield, the group traveled southeast to rejoin Quantrill, passing alongside Colyer Prairie on their way.

Colyer Cemetery lies adjacent to the prairie. The earliest marked graves, of English and German settlers, date back to 1863.



Western Prairie Fringed Orchid

Photos by Alexis Powell
Graphics by Tim Northcutt



Colyer Prairie

"The Colyer Prairie is an amazing place; a prairie gem that offers a myriad of showy wildflowers in a native prairie context. Of even greater importance is the opportunity to protect this parcel for all to see and experience this important piece of history in northeast Kansas."

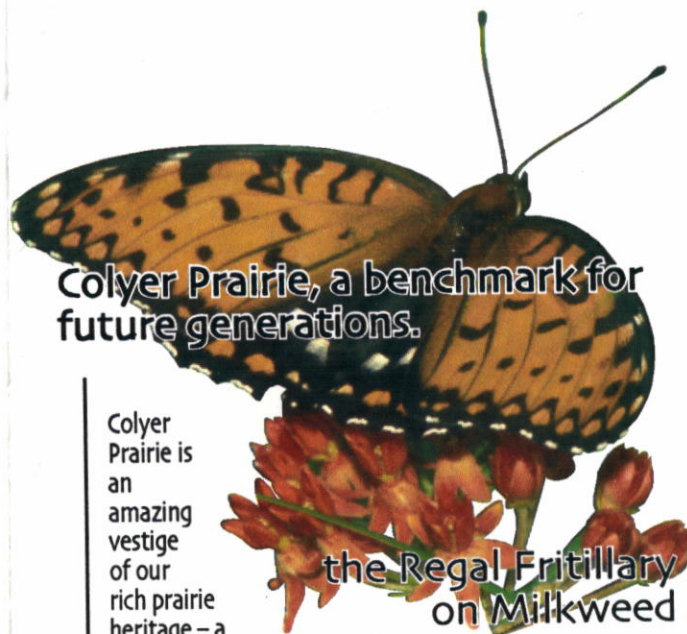
- Kelly Kindscher
Kansas Biological Survey

Colyer Prairie

Colyer Prairie is a nearly pristine remnant of the tallgrass prairie that once filled Douglas County. Located high atop the southern lip of the Kansas River Valley, it affords visitors a remarkable view of the surrounding area. A million years ago, the site marked the southernmost advance of a glacial ice sheet, thousands of feet thick, that extended from central Canada to the Kansas River. For the last ten thousand years, the view was of a now-vanished sea of tall grasses and flowers, stretching from horizon to horizon. Today, Colyer Prairie conveys a sense of that lost world, and harbors many rare and threatened species. It is an inspiration to those enthusiasts and benefactors who share the hope that we can preserve and restore the prairie, and pass on some of its history.

Grassland Heritage Foundation

Colyer Prairie Group is a project of the Grassland Heritage Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization devoted to prairie preservation and education. The GHF managed The Prairie Center in Olathe, Kansas, for 14 years before transferring ownership to the state, and now manages the 140-acre Snyder Prairie south of Holton, and the 2-acre Roulund-Wagner Prairie in Olathe.



Colyer Prairie, a benchmark for future generations.

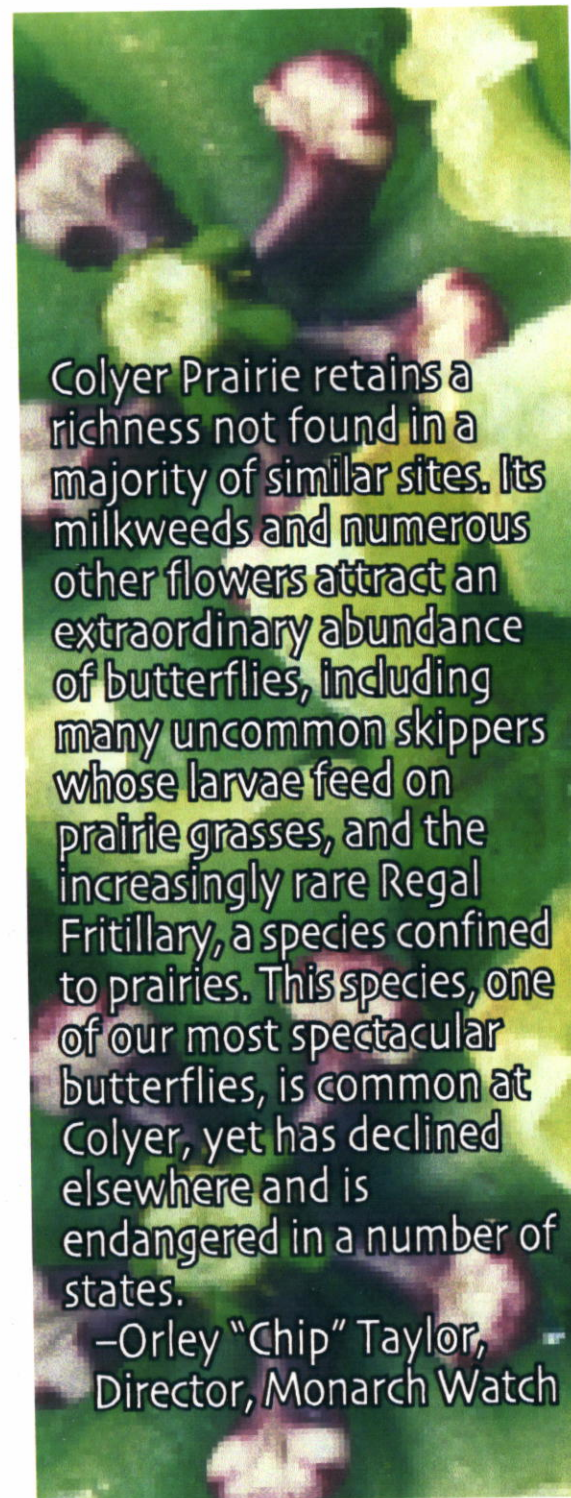
Colyer Prairie is an amazing vestige of our rich prairie heritage – a link to the

living sea of grass that held sway across eastern Kansas until two centuries ago. More than a place of beauty and wonder, it is an environmental legacy and benchmark for future generations.

- Craig Freeman
Kansas Biological Survey

Inhabitants

A Kansas Biological Survey assessment of Colyer Prairie in June 1991 found 106 species of plants. Among the plants identified were the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid and Mead's Milkweed, both of which the federal government lists as threatened. The orchid is presently found at only three other locations in Kansas. Visits by prairie enthusiasts have raised the total of known plant species to 194, including four Kansas State Rare Species and 24 that are indicators of undisturbed prairie.



Colyer Prairie retains a richness not found in a majority of similar sites. Its milkweeds and numerous other flowers attract an extraordinary abundance of butterflies, including many uncommon skippers whose larvae feed on prairie grasses, and the increasingly rare Regal Fritillary, a species confined to prairies. This species, one of our most spectacular butterflies, is common at Colyer, yet has declined elsewhere and is endangered in a number of states.

-Orley "Chip" Taylor,
Director, Monarch Watch